

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS ENDORSE PROPOSED QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE ACT

Reactions of Presidents Wilbur, Sproul, Millikan, Lyons and von KleinSmid to the Proposed Qualifying Certificate Law.—Basic provisions in the draft of a proposed qualifying certificate (basic science) law were printed, on page 339, in the November number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. In the December issue, on page 410, in connection with the discussion of the state election returns on Initiatives 9 (Chiropractic) and 17 (Naturopathic), additional comment was made concerning the need of such a statute in California. In the draft as submitted to the California Medical Association's Council, the suggested board of five qualifying certificate examiners was to consist of one faculty member from each of the following institutions of higher learning: The University of California, Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of Santa Clara and the California Institute of Technology. Marked copies of the November issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, with transmittal letters asking them to read the outline of the proposed law, were sent to Presidents Sproul, Wilbur, von KleinSmid, Lyons and Millikan. Members of the Association will be glad to learn consequently, that the purpose of the proposed law received prompt endorsement.

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Excerpts from the Letters Received from the Presidents.—President Ray Lyman Wilbur, of Stanford University, for many years has been a member of the California Medical Association, having started his educational career as lecturer in physiology in Cooper Medical College in 1899, to become, in a few years professor of medicine, in the School of Medicine of Stanford University, and later the dean of that institution, and in 1916 president of the University. As an ex-president of the American Medical Association, and as chairman of the American Medical Association Council on Medical Education, he has for years had an intimate knowledge of standards and laws bearing on pre-medical and medical training and licensure, and his point of view, therefore, is of special value. He writes:

"Thank you for your interesting letter of November 28 and the copy of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, for November, 1934. The plan outlined for a qualifying certificate law as recommended by the special committee meets with my general approval. The idea is not only sound but one that is already in operation elsewhere. California needs it. Stanford University stands ready to do what it can in this connection. We should be glad to be represented on a qualifying certificate board.

"All good wishes."

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In the draft of the law, as presented to the Council by the special committee, it is proposed to have the Regents of the University of California (of which board the Governor of the State is president ex officio), appoint the qualifying certificate board, one from each of the faculties

of the five institutions before mentioned. Hence, it is gratifying to know that President Robert G. Sproul expresses his whole-hearted support, as is evidenced by the excerpts from a letter received from him, which reads in part as follows:

"In reply to your letter of November 28, I would make the following comments upon the proposed qualifying certificate law described in the November issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

"In the first place, I am heartily in accord with what you are attempting to do. It seems to me that it is of the utmost importance that those who are to practice the healing art should have at least a modicum of knowledge of the fundamental sciences which underly it. . . .

"The University of California will, of course, be glad to coöperate in any plan for the improvement of standards which the medical profession may propose and the people of California may approve."

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Dr. Robert A. Millikan, director of the California Institute of Technology, whose researches brought to him a Nobel Prize, replied as follows:

"Upon my return to the laboratory I find certain correspondence from you and a copy of articles by you in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. I am very glad to express myself as Presidents Sproul and Wilbur have already done as being in sympathy with the purposes as expressed in these articles. I can also say that the California Institute of Technology would 'be glad to coöperate,' as President Sproul has expressed it, 'in any plan for the improvement of standards which the medical profession may propose and the people of California may approve.'"

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President James J. Lyons of the University of Santa Clara, in his reply letter, stated:

"Pardon my tardiness in acknowledging your letters and the copy of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

"I have perused the marked article and highly commend the plan proposed. Not only California, but the entire country needs it. We are behind other nations in 'stepping up' the professions. Too many students in this country have not a clear idea of what is expected of them not only in the medical field, but in the professions in general. I have heard European medical experts give our medical students the palm for practical things but deplored the weakness of their 'theory.' A thorough knowledge of all the underlying sciences will enable our practical students to be more skillful according to the best standards.

"I heartily endorse any plan that will elevate the standards of medicine and keep it deserving of its ancient appellation, the *art* of healing."

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The last letter received was from President Rufus von KleinSmid of the University of Southern California, from which we quote:

"Acknowledging receipt of your letter concerning the proposed Qualifying Certificate Act, let me say that we are genuinely in sympathy with any legislation which would tend to raise the standards of the professions. We should be glad to join with other institutions in a movement to standardize to a degree procedures on a high level. Awaiting developments in this matter with interest." . . .

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From the above it is apparent that the framework of the initial draft of the law, as presented to the California Medical Association's Council,

is basically sound. With this knowledge at hand, the elaboration of detail in the act offered for adoption can go forward with considerable assurance.

Members of the Association are again reminded of the invitation expressed in previous comments, that any modifications or criticisms of the proposed law will be cordially welcomed; and such suggestions can be sent to the editor, who has been serving as the chairman of the special committee.

COUNTY HOSPITALS SHOULD PRINT ANNUAL REPORTS

The Massive Donation of Gratuitous Professional Services in County Hospitals.—In large metropolitan institutions for the care of the poor sick, such as the hospitals of San Francisco and Los Angeles counties, the number of patient visits and of major and minor surgical procedures made by attending staff members, who give gratuitous service to the institutions, is very large. For example, at the Los Angeles County Hospital,* for the fiscal year, July, 1933, to July, 1934, the total number of patients admitted were 48,849; the total number of patient days being 706,938, or an average of 14.4 days per patient. On the surgical services of the institution were listed 18,746 patients, and 9,309 operations were done. In addition to the large number of in-patients above mentioned, the out-patient service for ambulatory cases recorded a total number of 507,432 out-patient visits for the year, or about 1,390 out-patient visits per day. While it is true that the Los Angeles County Hospital has a large resident staff (about 125 internes, who are nearly always in residence), the great majority of the 48,849 hospital patients admitted during the last fiscal year were seen by members of the attending staff, and most of the major operative work was done by the attending surgeons. With a record of 706,938 in-patient days and a total of 9,309 operations, plus a total of 507,432 out-patient visits, to cover a period of twelve months, it is self-evident that the attending staff members, when they rendered that amount of gratuitous service, gave to the taxpayers of Los Angeles County nothing less than a massive donation. In terms of money, and at less than minimum fee table rates, the services thus donated would have an annual value of much more than one million dollars!—quite a contribution, and far in excess of what any other group of citizens donated to the taxpayers during the last year. In San Francisco and other counties of California similar expressions of altruistic medical service have also been in evidence from the time that the county hospitals were first established. It is good both to remember and to occasionally mention these facts when criticisms and attacks by salaried social service and so-called welfare experts are made

against the medical fraternity and the manner under which its members so unpretentiously do their work.

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County Hospitals Should Print Annual Reports, with Money Evaluations of Professional Services Rendered.—Our special purpose in presenting the above summary is to emphasize the thought that when a group of citizens, such as an attending staff of a large public county hospital, each year give to the poor their professional services, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars and without cost to the other taxpayers (who, however, themselves charge for everything they sell or do for the hospital or its patients), then in decency the least that the community should do would be to publish and distribute to civic organizations a printed report putting on record the professional services so rendered, and placing their money values squarely before the consideration of the people. Poor as some of the countries in Europe are supposed to be, they do provide funds for the publication of just such detailed reports of their hospitals, and the unselfish work of their respective staffs.

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Non-existence of Such Printed Reports Responsible in Part for Lack of Appreciation of Altruistic Services Generously Rendered by the Medical Profession.—We are very much of the opinion that if in public hospitals of the United States in which attending staffs give, and give largely, such professional services, it had been stipulated from the beginning, as one of the conditions for the giving of such uncompensated service, that each institution should print an annual report in which the total money value of the professional services was indicated, then many members of the lay public and taxpayers would be more appreciative of what scientific medicine has been doing for their respective communities; and they would be far less than at the present in the mood to listen to specious reasoning and the vagaries of those who, misguided by insufficient appreciation of either the important professional or economic backgrounds involved, are insisting, with unseemly haste, on legislation leading nowhere unless to confusion.

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Attending Staffs and County Medical Societies Should Give This Subject Their Attention.—For these and other reasons, the thought is suggested to attending staffs of county hospitals and to the respective county medical associations, that an effort might well be made to have every county hospital in California, through authorization by the board of supervisors, print an annual report; with statements therein, not only of the nature of professional services gratuitously rendered, but of the actual value of such donations expressed in terms of the world's money. Such reports would be of interest to many, and only good could result from the needed publicity.

* The "Los Angeles County Hospital" is the medical unit of the "Los Angeles County General Hospital," as explained in the December CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 413.